

ISSUE 3

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Imagine





17 July 1978
Berkeley, CA

Craig Russell returns, bearing the gift of his fantastic art. Mikes Vosburg and Gilbert, Lee Marrs and Masaichi Mukaide return with various interesting perspectives. What more could you ask?

Well, we've got that, too. Mickey Schwaberow (remember his "stained glass" story in STAR*REACH #9) has returned to grace our pages with the beginning of a fairy-tale-like epic story entitled "Nebula" that has me charmed. Mickey brings a new type of story altogether, drawn much in the style of children's graphic literature, but containing characters and a story line that grown-up kids like ourselves can enjoy. Plans are to continue his story in a title all its own either later this year or early next, depending on his drawing schedule and our finances.

We hope you enjoy the direction IMAGINE has been taking. The only way we can find out, though, is if you write. And if you're into ego-boosting, there's always the chance you'll see it printed in our new lettercol on our inside back cover. So do it.

And don't forget our new address.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Friedrich".

IMAGINE #3 (August, 1978) is published quarterly by Star*Reach Productions, P.O. Box 2328, Berkeley, CA 94702; Mike Friedrich, editor and publisher. © copyright 1978 Star*Reach Productions. World rights reserved. Front cover art and the story "The Avatar and the Chimera" ©1978 P. Craig Russell. "Songs to Aging Children Come" ©1978 Mike Vosberg and Paul Levitz. "The Spider Thread" ©1978 Michael T. Gilbert and Dorothy Bucher. "Vignette: A Soft and Gentle Rain" ©1978 Michael T. Gilbert.

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ANY SIMILARITY TO REAL PERSONS, LIVING OR DEAD, EXCEPT FOR PURPOSES OF SATIRE, IS COINCIDENTAL.

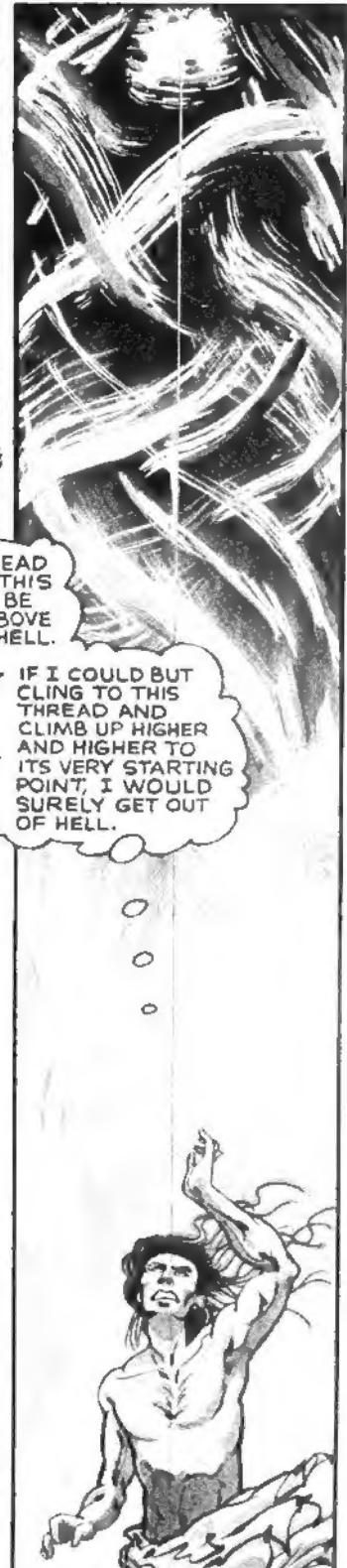
IN THE POOL OF BLOOD AT THE VERY BOTTOM OF HELL WHERE IT IS AS DARK AS NIGHT (BUT SOMETIMES THERE CAN BE SEEN ETERNAL FIRE) ARE TORTURED DEAD SINNERS STRUGGLING AND SQUIRMING LIKE DYING FROGS CHOKED WITH BLOOD.

ONE DAY, KANDATA, ONE OF THESE DEAD SINNERS, SAW A SILVERY WHITE THREAD SLIPPING GRADUALLY DOWN TOWARD HIM, TRAILING A SLENDER, GLIMMERING RAY OF LIGHT.

the spider thread

IT IS THE THREAD OF A SPIDER. THIS THREAD MAY BE CONTINUED ABOVE THE TOP OF HELL.

IF I COULD BUT CLING TO THIS THREAD AND CLIMB UP HIGHER AND HIGHER TO ITS VERY STARTING POINT, I WOULD SURELY GET OUT OF HELL.



STORY & ART BY MASAICH MUKAIDE, INSPIRED BY ATUTAGAMA'S SHORT STORY.
©1978 MASAICH MUKAIDE. LETTERED BY MARY GORDON.

WITH THIS IDEA IN HIS MIND,
KANDATA GRASPED THE THREAD
TIGHTLY IN BOTH HANDS AND
INSTANTLY BEGAN PULLING
HIMSELF UP HAND OVER HAND
WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.

CLIMBING UP THE THREAD,
KANDATA REMEMBERED HE
HAD ONCE SPARED A SPIDER
WHICH WAS STRUGGLING
FROM MISSING ITS LEGS.
HE THOUGHT THIS WAS
THE REWARD FOR HIS
GOOD DEED.



CLINGING FAST TO
THE DANGLING THREAD,
AND LOOKING DOWN
BELOW, HE SAW THE
POOL OF BLOOD FAR
BELOW HIS FEET.

IF THINGS GO WELL,
BY GOOD LUCK I MAY
POSSIBLY BE ABLE
EVEN TO GET INTO
PARADISE.

BUT THEN,
TIGHTENING
THE THREAD,
KANDATA
LOOKED DOWN
BELOW HIMSELF.

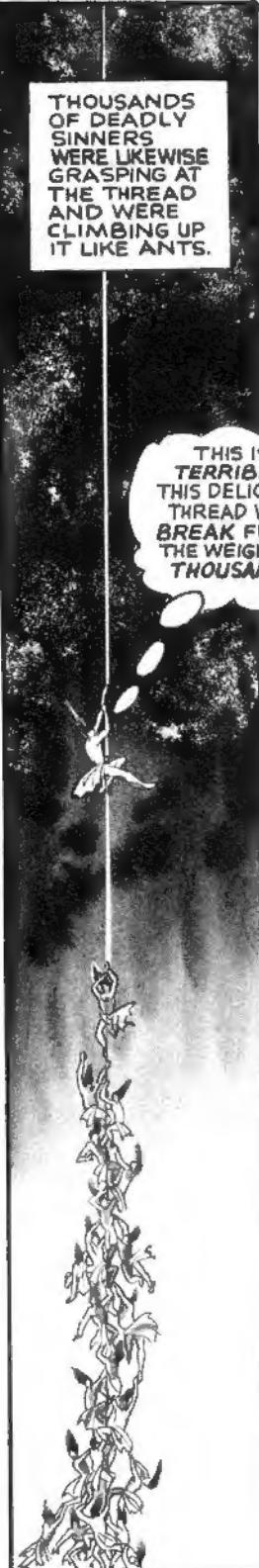
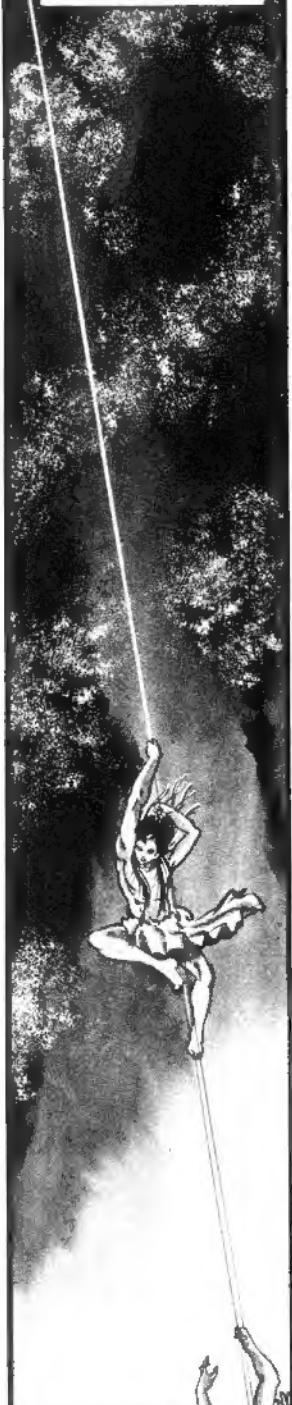
THOUSANDS
OF DEADLY
SINNERS
WERE LIKEWISE
GRASPING AT
THE THREAD
AND WERE
CLIMBING UP
IT LIKE ANTS.

HE SHOOK THE
THREAD HARD
TO DROP THEM
--TO THE LAST
MAN.

THIS IS
TERRIBLE.
THIS DELICATE
THREAD WILL
BREAK FROM
THE WEIGHT OF
THOUSANDS.

BASTARDS!
GET OFF!
THIS THREAD'S
MINE!
ALL OF YOU
GET OFF!

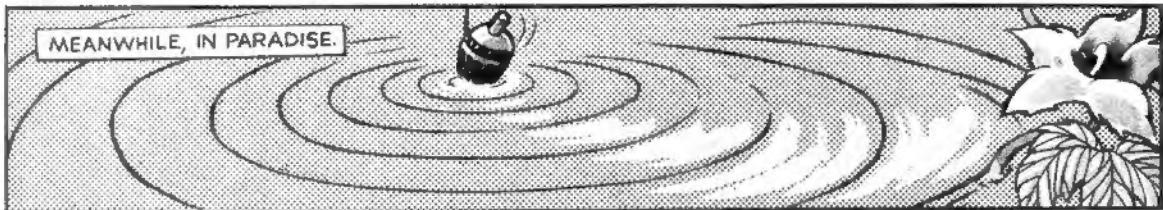
SUDDENLY...



AND KANDATA FELL INTO THE SAME HELL INTO WHICH HE HAD DOOMED THE OTHER THOUSANDS OF SINNERS.

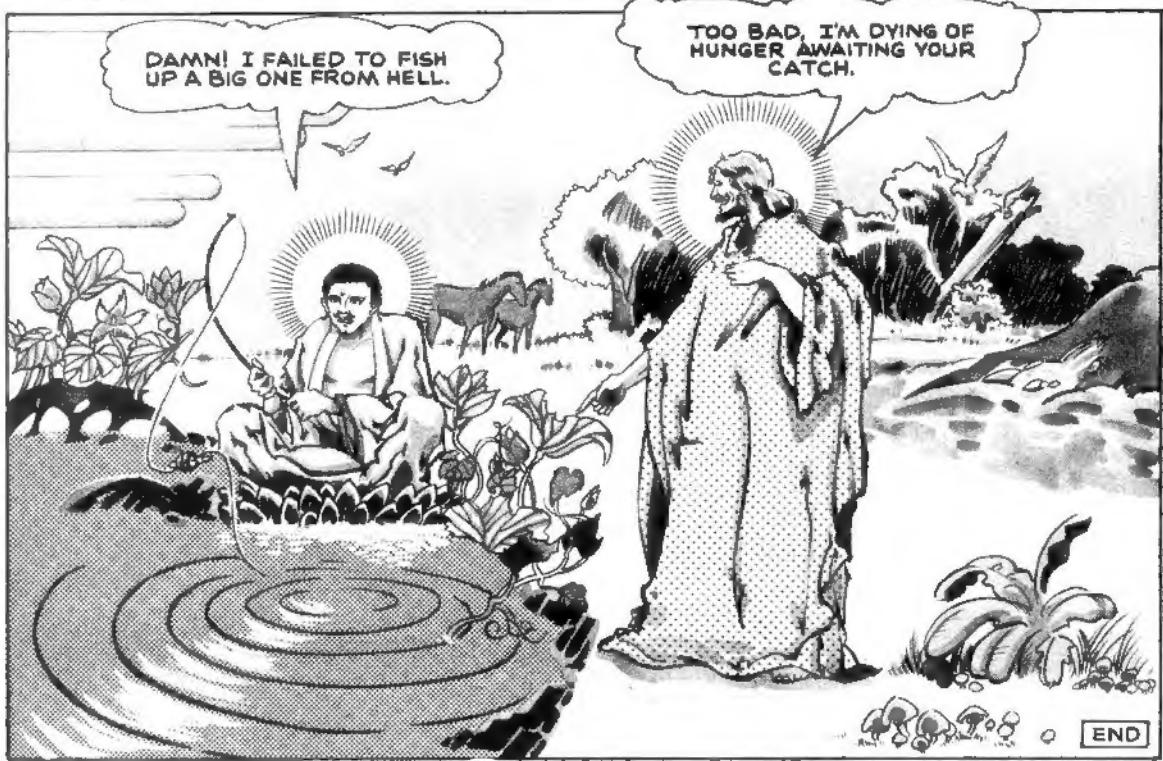


MEANWHILE, IN PARADISE.



DAMN! I FAILED TO FISH UP A BIG ONE FROM HELL.

TOO BAD, I'M DYING OF HUNGER AWAITING YOUR CATCH.



END

THIS IS THE WORLD IN WHICH MAURICE RAKSHASAR WALKS...
A SMALL SLICE OF ANYWHERE, MUCH THE SAME AS ANY
OTHER TOWN...

IT HAS A LIBRARY (WHERE
MAURICE SPENDS HIS DAY
PLACING UNREAD BOOKS
BACK ON THE SHELVES).

IT HAS A TOWN HALL (WHERE
THE MAYOR SPENDS HIS
DAY WAITING TO BE RE-
ELECTED).

IT HAS A COUNCIL (WHERE THE MEM-
BERS SPEND THEIR DAY SELLING THE
TOWN).

IT HAS A PARK (WHERE WORKMEN
SPEND THEIR DAY
GATHERING TOOLS
OF MECHANIZED
DESTRUCTION).

IT EVEN HAS A
MILLIONAIRE,
JAMES MCKINDREN.
A MAN WITH A PLAN.

THIS IS THE WORLD
IN WHICH MAURICE
RAKSHASAR WALKS...
A WORLD WHERE
THE PEACE OF A
PARK IS AN EAGERLY
AWAITED RESPITE
FROM THE PETTY
HUMILIATIONS OF
THE DAY.



TOMORROW HE WILL
FINALLY BUY THE PARK
FROM THE COUNCIL
AT THE TOWN HALL...
AND THEN HE WILL
BUILD HIS FACTORY
THERE.



BUT THIS IS NOT
THE WORLD IN
WHICH MAURICE
RAKSHASAR
LIVES.

FOR MAURICE RAKSHASAR
LIVES IN A WORLD OF MAGIC
TO WHICH NO ONE ELSE IS
ADMITTED.

AT LEAST,
NOT YET.

SONGS...

THE WORLD IN WHICH CECILIA SCHLABOTSKI LIVES IT'S A PRETTY WORLD, FILLED WITH PARTIES AND PARKS.

AND SHE'S DECIDED THAT IF THE PARK'S NOT GOING TO BE A PART OF HER WORLD, NEITHER IS SHE.

WHAT--???

HEY--YOU CAN'T DO THAT!



to aging children come...

STORY/PICTURES • MIKE VOSBURG WORDS • PAUL LEVITZ

For Bottie Creek & Eagle Lake



LET ME
JUST
GET MY
CASE...

...PICK OUT
THE PROPER
ENCHANT-
MENTS ...

...AND WE
CAN BEGIN.

LOOKS GREAT--
BUT DO YOU
REALLY THINK
IT'LL WORK ?

SURE...

THIS TIME IT HAS
TO WORK--
TOO IMPORTANT
TO BOMB OUT--
EVEN IF IT NEVER
WORKED BEFORE.

THEN, AS SUDDENLY AS THEIR WORLDS COLLIDED,
MAURICE AND CECILIA FIND THEIR FAMILIAR
WORLDS FADING BEFORE THEIR EYES ...

...AND IN THE COILING INCENSE AND
BEWITCHING SMOKE, THE REALM
OF SORCERY APPEARS...



THEY VANISHED--AND
SUDDENLY THIS KIDS
HERE.

SOB SOB

DON'T YOU
SEE,
MAURICE--
THAT'S
IT!

W-WHO
ARE
YOU?

JUST
FRIENDS.

CAN'T BE.
I'M JIMMY--
AND I DON'T
HAVE NO
FRIENDS.

NOBODY TO
PLAY WITH--AND
NO PLACE TO
PLAY,
NEITHER.

OF COURSE YOU
HAVE FRIENDS,
JIMMY-- YOU
HAVE US.

AND LOOK--THERE'S
PLENTY OF PLACES
TO PLAY--

--A WHOLE
PARK FULL
OF THEM.

AND IT'S TRUE, FOR EVEN AS THEY
SPOKE A PORTION OF THEIR WORLD
BECAME WHAT IT WAS BEFORE... AND
A PARK IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO
PLAY.

HOURS
OF HAP-
PINESS
LATER...

'CMON,
JIMMY--
GRAB
IT!

B
WOP

SURE--

IF I
CAN FIND
IT!

OF COURSE
YOU CAN.

YEAH... MUST BE HERE.

NOW!

WHAT IS IT,
REESE, WHY'S
IT CHASIN' ME?

CRUNCHH

IT'S A
MONSTER,
JIMMY--

--A MONSTER
THAT WANTS
TO WRECK
THE PARK!

NOOOOOO...

RUMBLE

RUNNABLE

IT'S UP TO
YOU JIMMY--
YOU CAN
STOP IT!

--HELP--
HELP ME,
PLEASE--

I
DON'T
KNOW!

NO--CAN'T--CAN'T!

Maurice.
WHAT'S
HAPPENING?

--PLEASE--

BUT THIS WORLD OF SPIRITS IS A TRANSIENT
ONE... AND AS SUNRISE DISPELLED THE LAST
FADING WISPS OF SMOKE, THE LAST OF IT
DISAPPEARS AS WELL...

WHEN...
SUNRISE
WE SURE
WERE
FAR
GONE.

I'M NOT SURE,
CECILIA...
I'VE NEVER
BEEN THERE
BEFORE.
I SURE HOPE IT WAS
REAL--BUT I GUESS WE
WON'T KNOW
TILL NOON.

SEE YOU
THERE?

WAS THAT REAL--
OR JUST THE SMOKE?

YOU BET,
MAURICE--AND
THANKS FOR
TRYING.

NOON. THE COUNCIL MEN STAND, PAPERS AND PENS IN HAND, WAITING FOR THE MOMENT OF SALE... WHILE CARING PEOPLE WISH AND UNCARING MACHINES WATCH.

AT THE STROKE OF 12, A LONG CAR PULLS UP...



... AND JAMES MCKINDREN REACHES FOR THE PEN.



OR, PERHAPS, A MEMORY... OF A TIME THAT NEVER WAS.

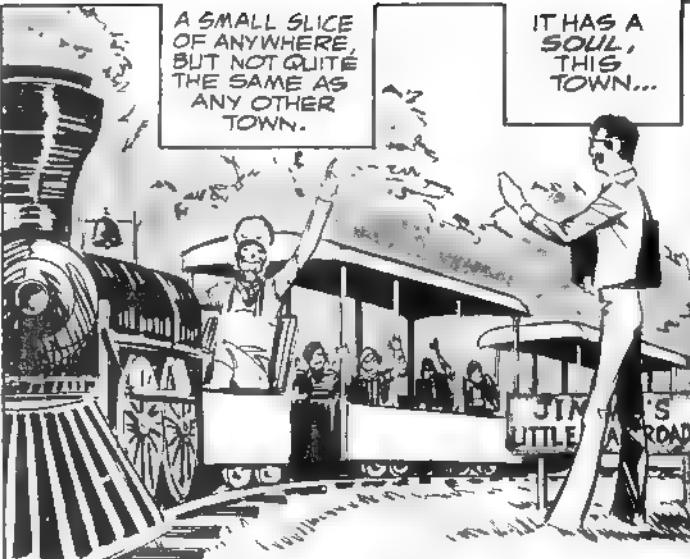
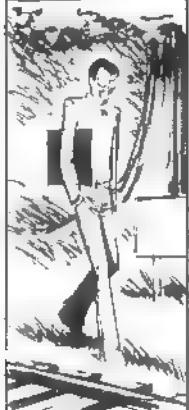


THIS IS THE WORLD IN WHICH MAURICE RAKSHASAR WALKS...

A SMALL SLICE OF ANYWHERE, BUT NOT QUITE THE SAME AS ANY OTHER TOWN.

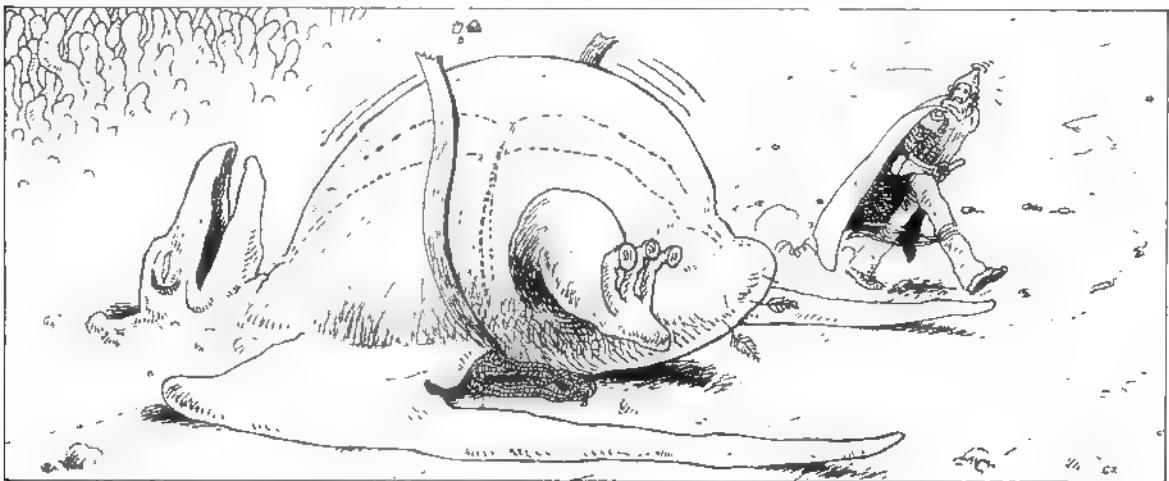
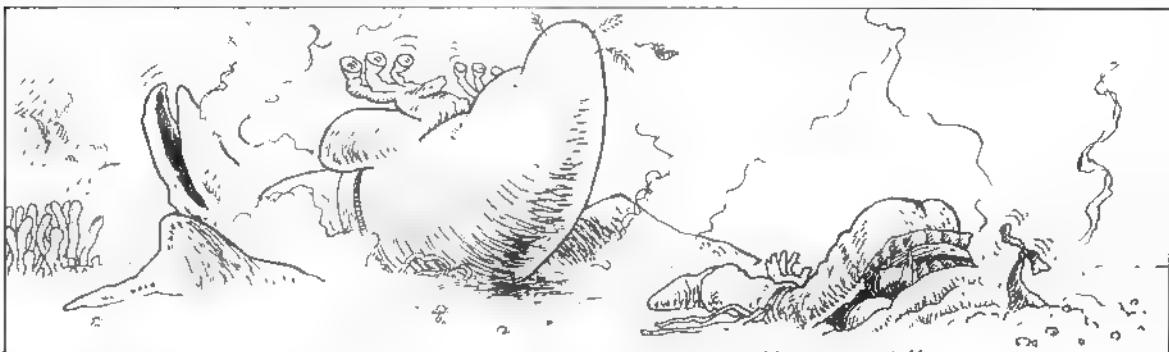
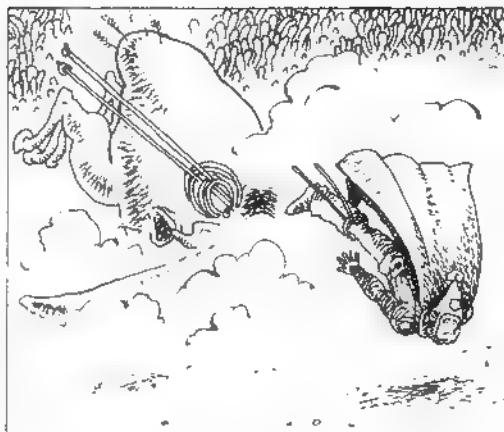
IT HAS A SOUL, THIS TOWN...

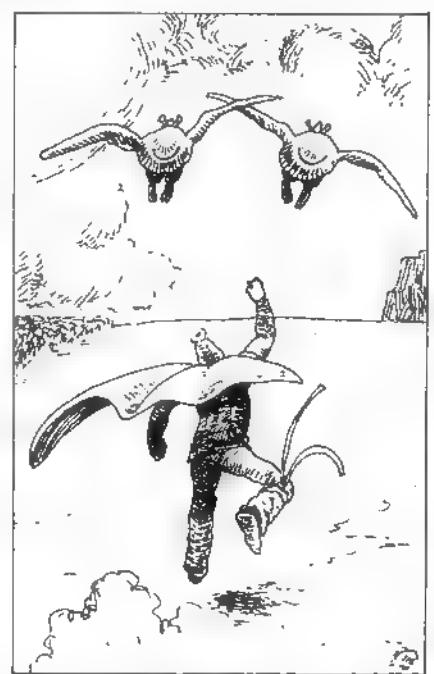
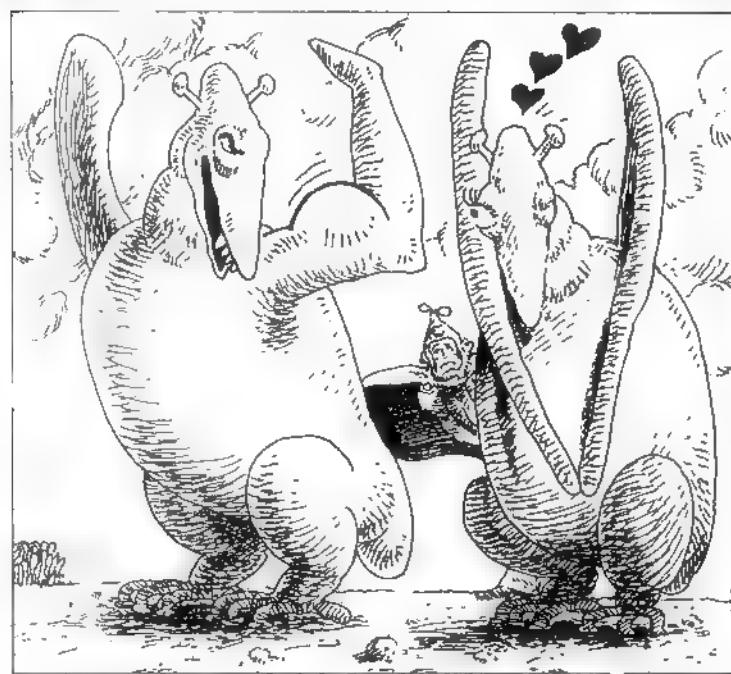
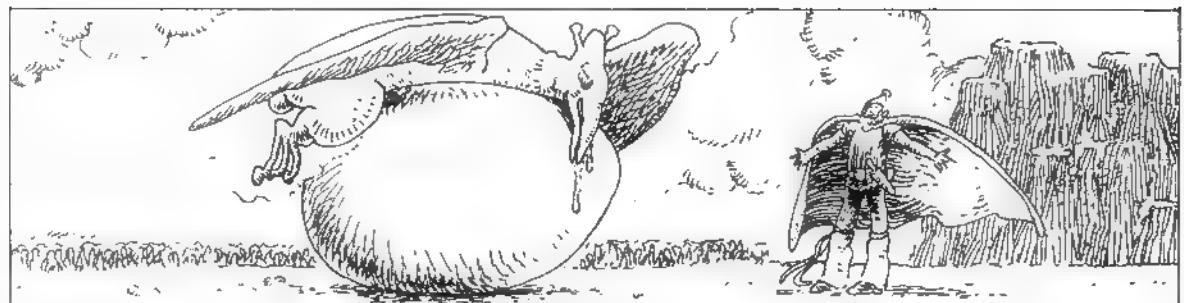
...AS DOES THE CHIEF ENGINEER OF ITS PLAYGROUND, A RETIRED MILLIONAIRE NAMED JAMES Mc KINDREN.



ERSATZ

BY LEE MARRS-
WITH BEST REGARDS
TO MOEBIUS.





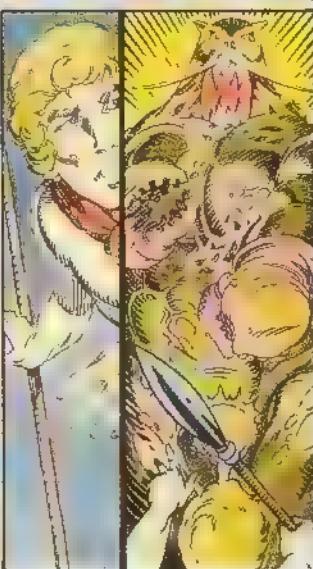
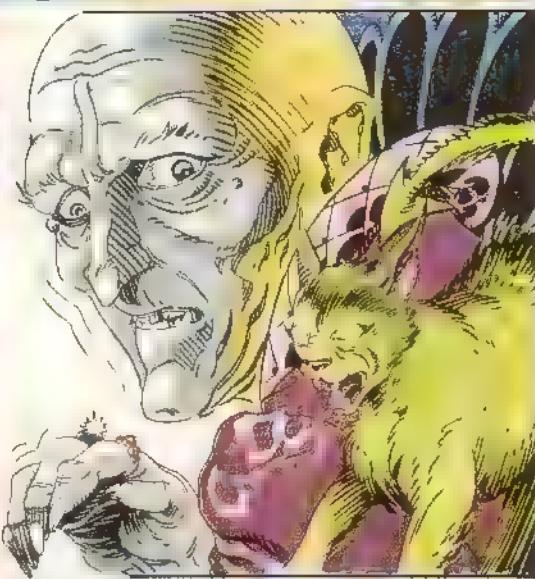


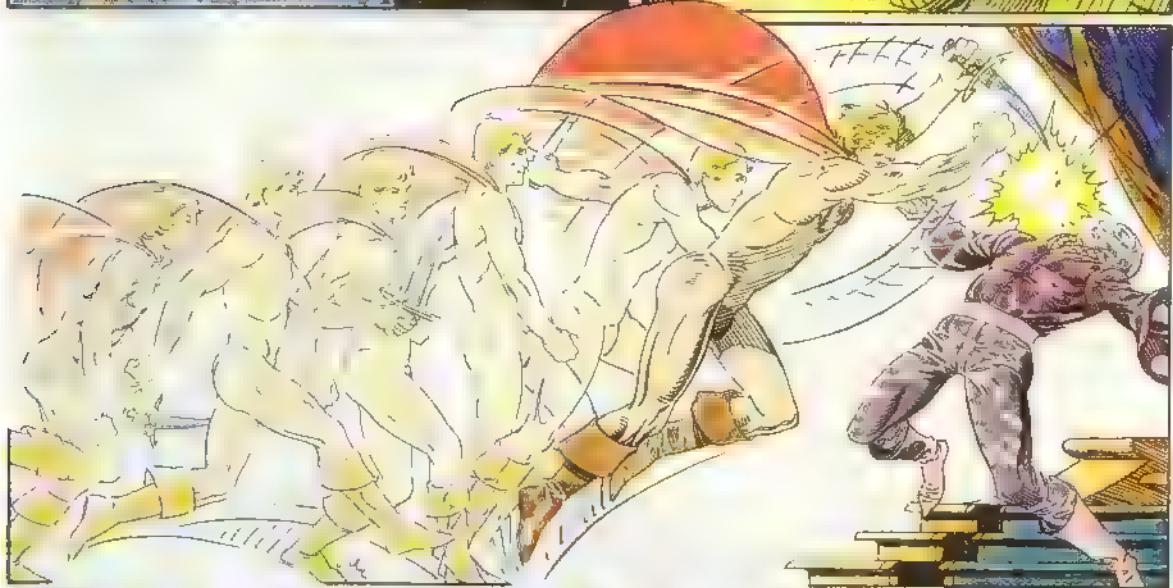
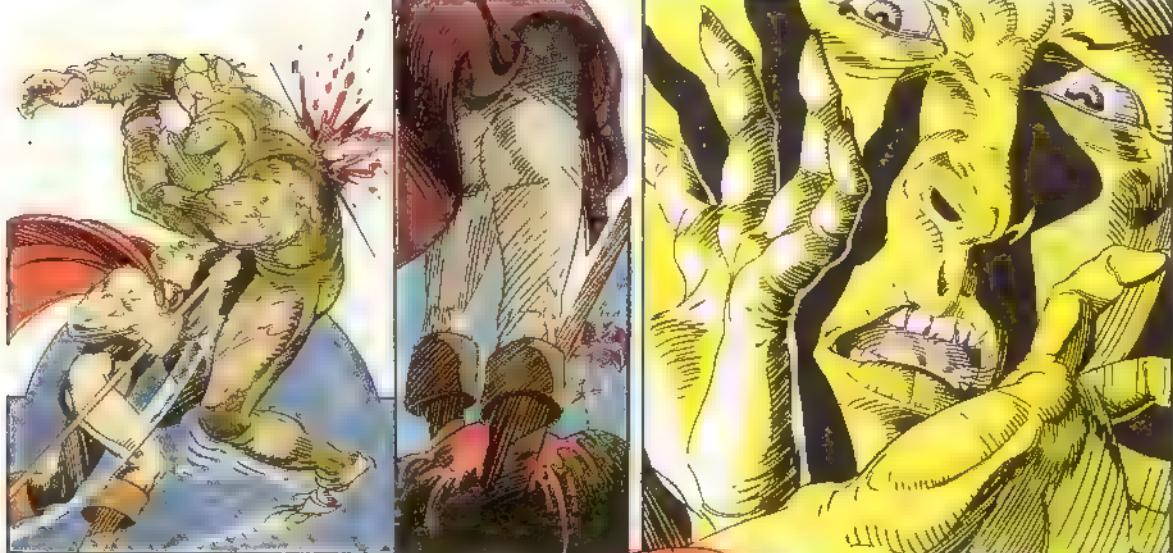
PART TWO

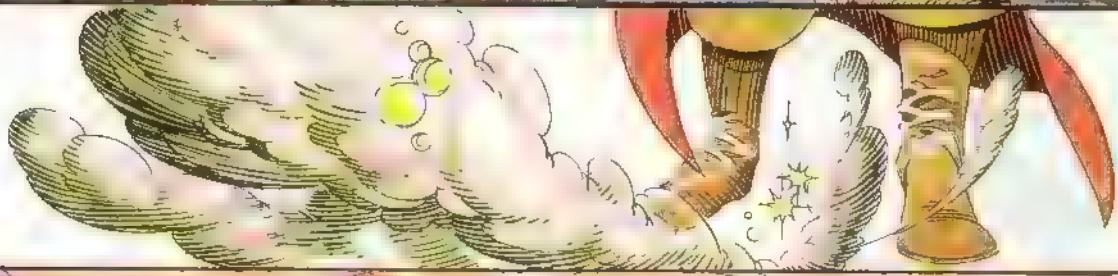
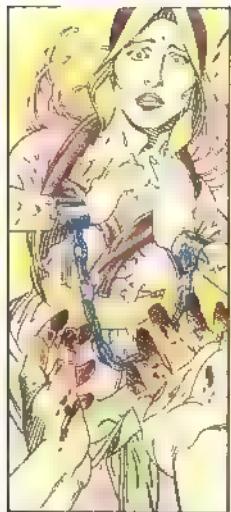
Underwater The Avatar regains his senses. In a swirl of mist he finds himself in a snow swept ice palace. He makes his way to a cave where he finds the castle of the demon captor Helioners. The cronosaurus attacks and is impaled on a spear. The Avatar murders the demon captor and extends his bloody hands to the Chimera. The Chimera who fled disappears and the castle and the land of ice are swept away. The Avatar is left on a sun-baked plain alone. In disgust he smashes the knife and rejects the way of the mindless barbarian. A tower rises out of the sun and and with his key he crosses its threshold. There's a shield and a suit of golden armor. He dons it. Transfigured he rises from the crashing waves and by the pounding sea is reunited with the fury materialized Chimera. They sail across the sea and into the sun.



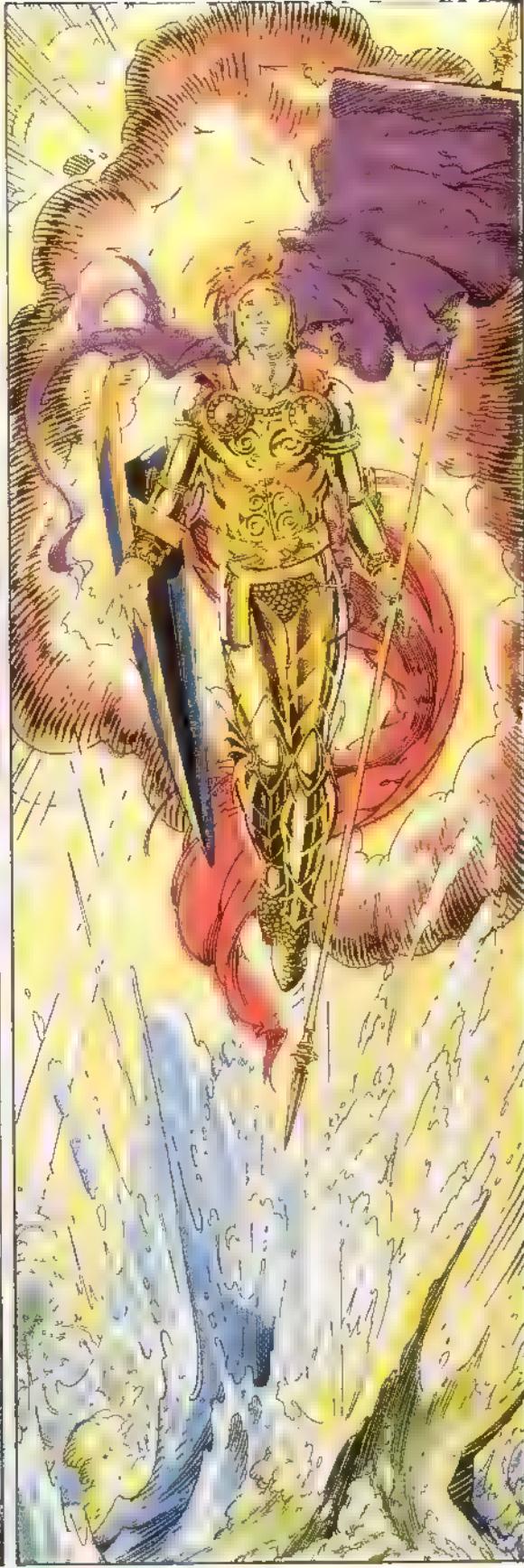


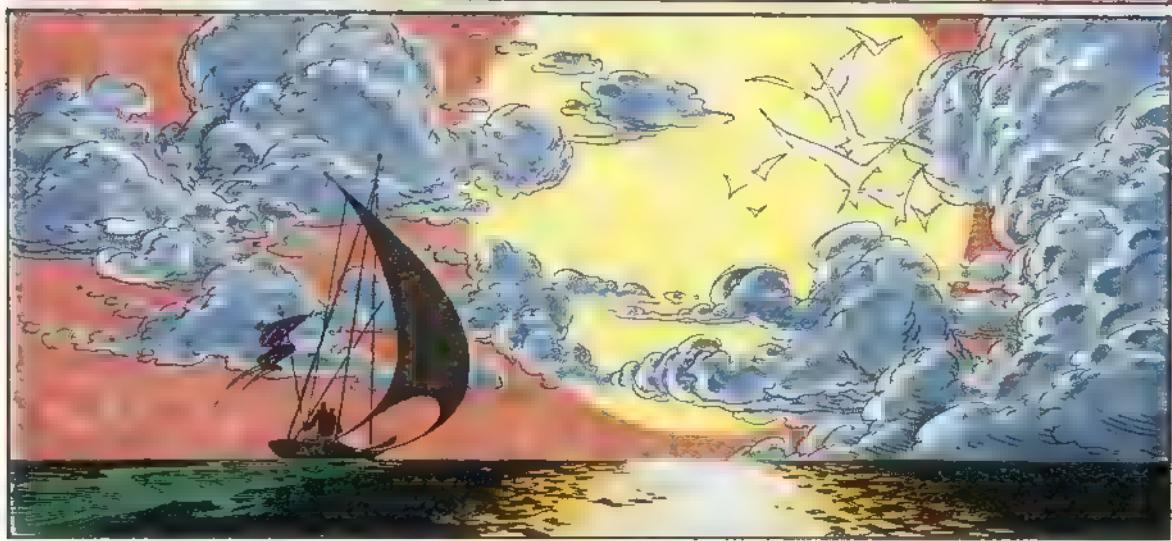
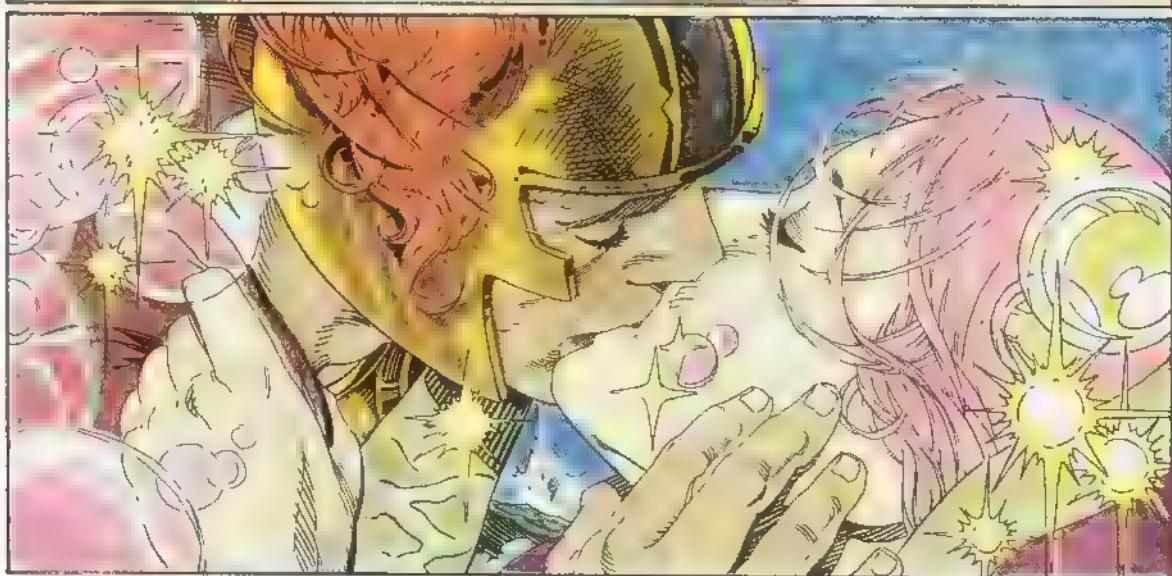
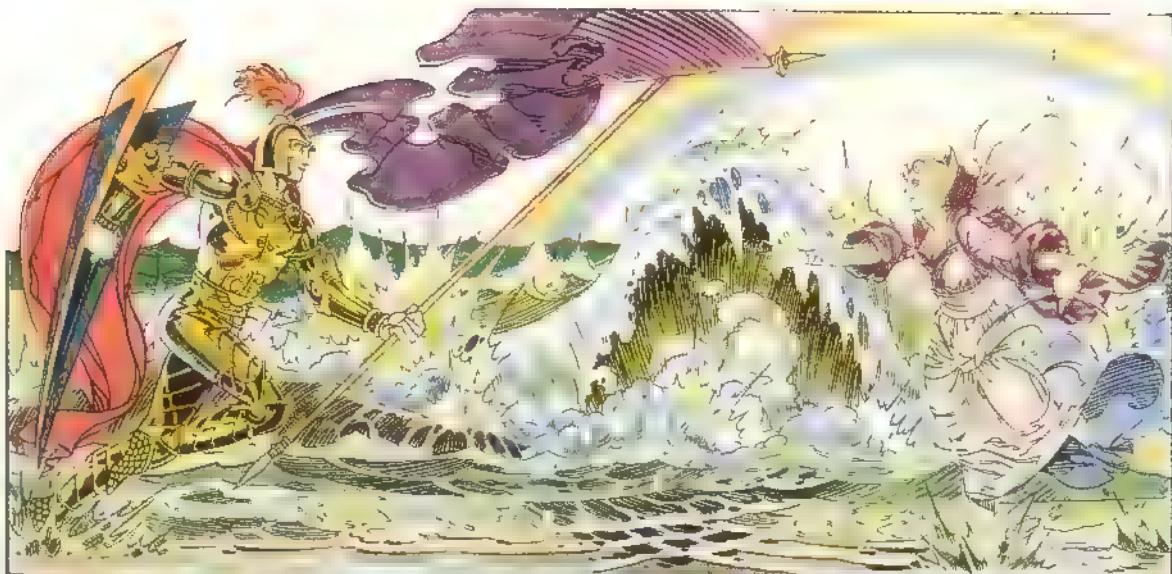












BY MEANS OF ART WE ARE SOMETIMES SENT DIM BRIEFLY REVELATIONS UNATTAINABLE BY REASON
LIKE THAT WHICH IS TELLING IN THE FAIRY TALES. LOOK INTO IT AND YOU WILL SEE NOT YOURSELF BUT FOR A MOMENT
THAT WHICH PASSETH UNDERSTANDING A REALM TO WHICH NO MAN CAN RIDE OR FLY AND FOR WHICH THE SOUL BEGINS TO ACHIEVE

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

NEBULA

CHAPTER
ONE

GAVIN'S RING

Miasmal serpents made of mist
Enshroud the towered edifice
Of Highlord Albonitus...

Reality weaves grim ballets
of hide and seek within the maze
of labyrinthine coils...

The phantom fangs would soon devour
A traveller at this dark hour
Who needed eyes to see...

THE TRAIL
IS CLEAR!
THE ANSWER
WE SEEK LIES
WITHIN THOSE
WALLS!

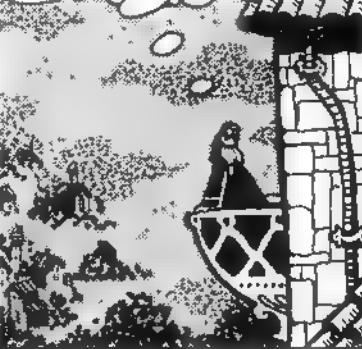
WITHIN THOSE WALLS...

TOO MANY QUESTIONS! DAMN FOG! EATING HOLES IN MY CITY! HOLES IN MY MIND! I'M GETTING OLD! WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I COULD BUY THE ANSWER TO ANY QUESTION, AND TAKE IT FROM THOSE THAT WOULDNT SELL!

QUESTIONS! LIKE YOU, MY PRETTY RING! I OWN MORE PRECIOUS JEWELS THAN ANY MAN IN THE LAND, YET I HAVE NEVER SEEN YOUR LIKE! EVEN MY LOQUACIOUS COURT JEWELER COULD PUT NO NAME ON YOUR SUBSTANCE! ARE YOU MADE OF SOLID LIGHT?

HIS REIGN HAS NOT BEEN A KIND ONE FOR HIS PEOPLE!

YET THIS IS AN EASY QUESTION, WHEN COMPARED TO THE RIDDLE OF MY CHIEF ASSASSIN! MERE DAYS AGO, KREEGAR COULD SPLIT A HAIR WITH A DAGGER'S THROW ACROSS MY COURT!



NOW HE CAN'T HIT HIS MOUTH WITH A SPOONFUL OF MUSH!

GUARD! IS THERE NO WORD OF THAT USELESS WITCH?

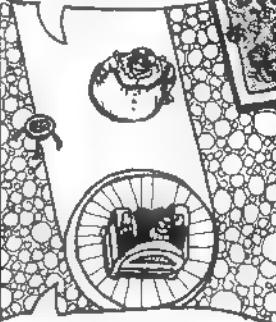
YES, HIGHLORD! SHE HAS JUST BEEN SEEN ON THE ROAD BEFORE THE INNER COURTYARD!

DOES M'LADY GRETCH READ A SNAIL IN HER HASTE? REMOVE THE COURT FOOL TO AN ANTE-ROOM, THEN USHER THE WITCH IN!



ALBONITUS ENJOYS HIS POSITION OF POWER, AND IS TRULY IGNORANT OF HOW LITTLE HE REALLY WIELDS! HE HAS MANY VICES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS LISTENING TO POOR ADVISORS...

GOOD EVENING, HIGHLORD! I CAME LIKE THE WIND AT YOUR SUMMONS! I TRUST YOUR HEALTH IS GOOD?



'TIS ROTTEN, AS ALWAYS THIS TIME OF YEAR, AS YOU WELL KNOW, GRETCH! BUT IF PAST YEARS ARE ANY INDICATION, I SHALL SOON MIRACULOUSLY RECUPERATE! GUARD! BRING KREEGAR IN!

AH, I SEE EVEN YOU, MY ELOQUENT SOOTH-SAYER, ARE RENDERED SPEECHLESS! A SLAVE MERCHANT TRIED TO SELL HIM BACK TO ME EARLY THIS MORNING!



QUELL! THE STENCH OF QUELL'S TOUCH IS BEYOND DOUBT! WHY DOES HIS FOUL HAND ENTER INTO THE GAME AT THIS POINT?

WHAT COULD TURN ONE OF THE MOST FEARED BLADES IN THE LAND INTO A DROOLING IDIOT?



PODDERING FOOL! WOULD THAT I WERE NOT FORCED TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH THIS MUMBO-JUMBO!

COUGH! COUGH! ISN'T IT FOGGY ENOUGH OUTSIDE? MUST YOU FILL MY CHAMBERS WITH YOUR CHOKING VAPORS?



SILENCE! AS I CAST KREEGAR'S HAIR INTO THE FLAMES AN IMAGE FORMS...

IT'S
NEBULA!

ALBONITUS! THIS IS NOT
MY DOING! SEIZE THEM
AT ONCE, AS YOU VALUE
YOUR THRONE!!

GUARDS!!
ARREST THE
INTRUDERS IN
THE NAME OF
ALBONITUS!!

AND
KILL
THE
CAT!!

IN THE ANDST OF
SUDDEN CHAOS, THE
THREE NEWCOMERS
POOL THEIR MINDS
TOGETHER AS
ONE ...
AND ACT!

THE GUARDS ARE PARALYZED IN MID-LEAP. SWORDS HALF-DRAWN.. SHOUTS DANGLING HALF-FORMED ON THEIR L.P.S..

HIGHLORD ALBONITUS IS PETRIFIED INTO A GRANDIOSE STATUE, MOUTH AGAPE IN MID-COMMAND!

GRETCH'S FACE IS A FROZEN MASK OF HATRED, FRINGING ON FEAR AND DISBELIEF A CURSE CAUGHT ON THE TIP OF HER TONGUE...



IT'S DONE! THEY ARE IMMOBILIZED! CAN YOU HOLD THEM BY YOURSELF, INCUBUS?

YES, BUT WORK QUICKLY!

IT'S THE TOUCH OF QUELL!! HIS MIND IS A MORASS! IS THERE ANY HOPE INCUBUS?

GRUA.. BA.. KREE GOVAL...

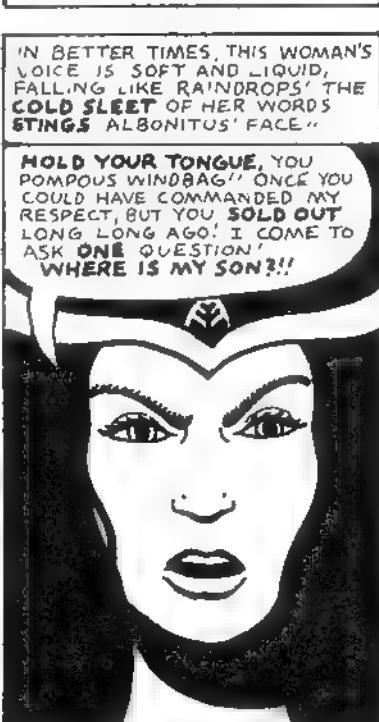


AH, YES 'GRETCH! VERY POOR TIMING ON OUR PART THAT YOU WERE HERE, BUT WE HAD LITTLE CHOICE.'

G-GET... THAT DEVIL.. CAT-T.. OUT OF MY MIND.. BEFORE I.. ERG!!

IT IS NOT GRETCH'S MOUTH I FEAR, INCUBUS' UNHINGE ALBONITUS JAWS'

'IN BETTER TIMES, THIS WOMAN'S VOICE IS SOFT AND LIQUID, FALLING LIKE RAINDROPS; THE COLD SLEET OF HER WORDS STINGS ALBONITUS' FACE..'



SORRY, NEBULA! SHE IS FIGHTING LIKE A FURY!

A FAINT GRIN MARKS THE CAT'S FEATURES AS HE TIGHTENS HIS MENTAL GRIP.

SPUT'E WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS WOMAN? BREAKING INTO MY COURT, CASTING SPELLS ON MY GUARDS? RELEASE ME FROM THIS UNDIGNIFIED POSE AT ONCE!

'HOLD YOUR TONGUE, YOU POMPOUS WINDBAG!' ONCE YOU COULD HAVE COMMANDED MY RESPECT, BUT YOU SOLD OUT LONG LONG AGO! I COME TO ASK ONE QUESTION: WHERE IS MY SON??'



ALBONITUS WAS READY WITH ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS BUT SHE ASKED THE **WRONG** QUESTION...

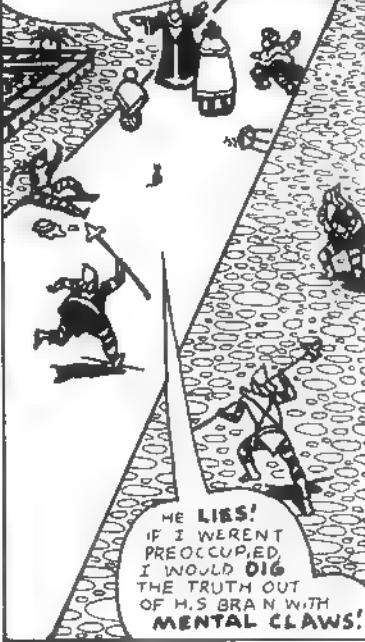
YOUR SON? I KNOW NOTHING OF YOUR SON! DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A KIDNAPPER OF LITTLE BOYS?

INCUBUS?

THERE IS NO FALSEHOOD IN HIS VOICE! HE IS JUST A PUPPET AND KNOWS NOT WHAT THEY DO BEHIND HIS BACK!

THE **RING**, THEN ALBONITUS' WE SENSE SOMETHING OF GAVIN'S NEARBY! IT **MUST BE HIS RING!** WHERE IS IT?

RING? I KNOW NOTHING OF A RING! YOU ARE BABBLING WOMAN!



HE LIES!
IF I WEREN'T PREOCCUPIED,
I WOULD DIG
THE TRUTH OUT
OF H.S BRAIN WITH
MENTAL CLAWS!

WE HAVE NO TIME FOR GAMES, ALBONITUS! MY SON'S LIFE MAY BE AT STAKE WHILE YOU DAWdle!

CRESCENT! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!

WHAT'S SHE DOING TO ME?!!
MY ROBE ... IS ALIVE!!
SOMEBODY SAVE ME!!
GUARDS!! GUARDS!!!

ALBONITUS IS SUSPENDED OVER THE COURTROOM POOL LIKE A GIANT CATERPILLAR IN A VELVET COCOON!!

GRETCH! GRETCH! I PAY YOU A FORTUNE FOR YOUR SERVICES! USE YOUR MAGIC TO STOP THEM!! GRETCH!

GRETCH
CANNOT HELP
YOU NOW,
M'GHLOD!
HOW MANY
DUNKINGS
DO YOU
NEED?

MOTHER
THERE IS
NO NEED.
I JUST
TOUCHED
GAVIN'S RING
WITH MY
MIND. HE
HID IT WITHIN
IRON TO
HINDER MY
SEARCH



GOOD GIRL! CAN YOU CALL IT TO ME?

NOT WHILE I'M HOLDING THE OLD MAN UP AT THE SAME TIME!

THEN DROP HIM!
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A GOOD DUNKING TO CLEANSSE ALBONITUS SOUL'

CRESCEENT DOES NOT
HEAR THE SPLASH
AS HER SMALL
BROW WRINKLES IN
CONCENTRATION

ACROSS THE CHAMBER
THE ROYAL CHEST
CREAKS .

AND BUCKLES...

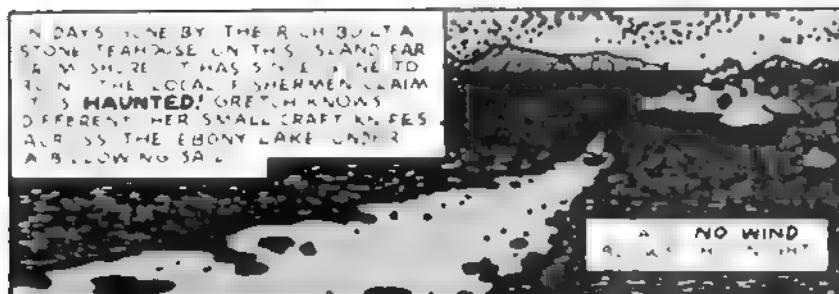
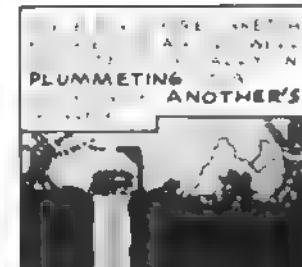
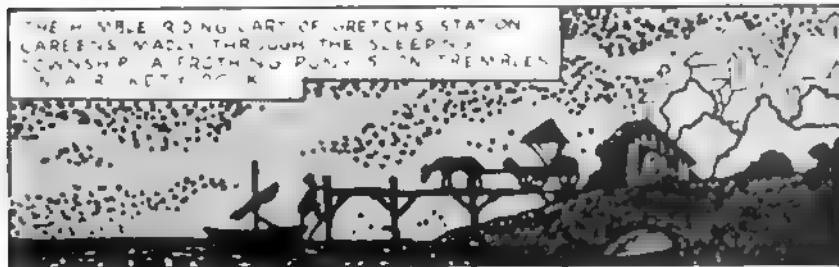
AND WRENCHES
ASUNDER!

BLESS YOU, MAJESTY.
GAVIN'S RING IS AGED
BY GARTH'S OWN
HAN

FOR
AN INSTANT
NEBULA
WANTS TO
BREAKING; THE
MONTHS HAVE
BEEN LONG, THE
TRAILS STEEP, THE
MEMORIES TOO REAL!
THEN ..

NEBULA! I'M LOSING
MYSELF, IT'S
TOO STRONG! PLEASE
HURRY!"

"I AM SORRY,
NEBULA RUN,
CRESCEENT RUN!"



THE UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR ECHOES WITH THE SOUND OF SPLINTERING GLASS...

MORONS!
IMBECILES!!



AFTER A LIFETIME OF SCHEMING AND SUFFERING WE FINALLY CAPTURE GARTH, THE CLANBINDER, AND NOW, ON TOP OF HIS BIZARRE AMNESIA, YOU TELL ME YOU LOST HIM? LOST HIM??

PLEASE, M'LADY! WE ARE BUT THE MESSAGE-BEARERS...



MEGALLA! I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU AT ONCE' ALONE!

GRETCH! IT'S ABOUT TIME!" BEGONE, YOU WORTHLESS CLODS" WOULD THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE TO KEEP THAT FOOL ALBONITUS ALIVE BEYOND HIS TIME, FOR FEAR THEY'D REPLACE HIM WITH SOMEONE COMPETENT! WHAT-EVER THAT FOSSIL WANTED CAN'T COMPARE TO THE CRISIS HERE!

THE CLANBINDER HAS DISAPPEARED FROM OUR HIDDEN PRISON!

MY NEWS IS ALMOST WORSE! IT IS LUCKY ALBONITUS DID SUMMON ME...



FOR NEBULA APPEARED, ALONG WITH HER BRAT AND THAT BLASPHEMOUS CAT!

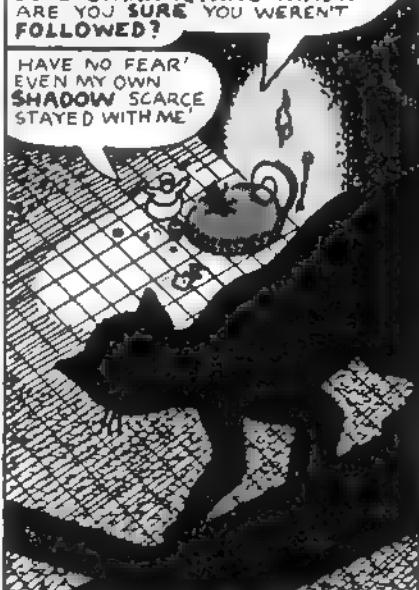
WHAT?! IMPOSSIBLE!!



OF ALL THE BOYS TO PICK FOR OUR NEEDS KREEGAR KIDNAPPED NEBULA'S SON!

FIRST THE CLANBINDER, THEN NEBULA! HAS THE WHOLE WORLD GONE STARK-RAVING MAD?! ARE YOU SURE YOU WEREN'T FOLLOWED?

HAVE NO FEAR! EVEN MY OWN SHADOW SCARCE STAYED WITH ME!



MEGALLA! WE HAVE DETECTED AN OUTSIDE PRESENCE IN OUR SANCTUARY! THE ROOM OF POTIONS HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH! WE ARE SEARCHING CHAMBER BY CHAMBER!

GRETCH!

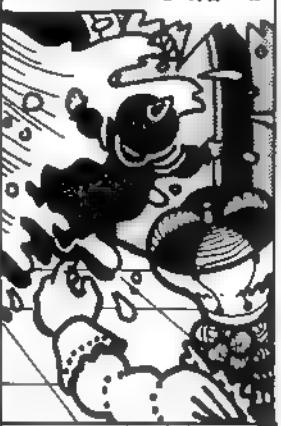


HOO-BOY'

DOUBLE THE GUARD AT
EVERY EXIT! GRETCH, TO
THE SURFACE I'LL SEE
TO THE LOWER LEVELS!



GRETCH! THE FLOOD-
GATES TO THE UPPER
LAKE HAVE ALL BEEN
SABOTAGED! SAVE ME!



I'VE GOT YOU MEGALLA!
NOW CAST A SPELL ON
THIS INFERNAL FLOOD
BEFORE WE ARE BOTH
DROWNED!



ON COMMAND THE
DELUGE FREEZES...

BRRRRR! YOU STOPPED
IT ALL R.GHT! NOW WE
MAY DIE OF FROSTBITE
INSTEAD

WHAT DO
YOU WANT?
I STOPPED
IT DIDN'T
I? G VE ME
A MINUTE
AND I'LL
REMEMBER
A SPELL TO
DISSIPATE

AT A TUG ON THEIR MENTAL LINK,
NEBULA PULLS INCUBUS BACK TO HER...

INCUBUS!
PRAISE
THE
GIVER
YOU'VE
COME
BACK
SAFELY!

JUST BARELY!
THE RUNT'S OWN
WRATH SHIELDED
ME AT F.RST!
I LEFT THEM
A DIVERSION
TO BUY US MORE
TIME'

THEY DID HAVE
A STOLEN BAG OF
MENORAH'S DUST;
I KNOW SHE WOULD
WANT US TO HAVE
IT IN THIS TIME
OF TRIAL'



KREEGAR DID NOT
KNOW GAVIN WAS
YOUR SON WHEN HE
KIDNAPPED HIM NOR
DID GRETCH NOR
MEGALLA, UNTIL
THIS NIGHT BUT I
BEAR GLAD TIDINGS
AS WELL! GARTH IS
ALIVE!! HE DID NOT
PERISH IN THE GREAT
HOLOCOAST AS WE
FEARED! MEGALLA
HAD HIM IMPRISONED,
BUT HE HAS ESCAPED!



GARTH..... ALIVE!! OH
INCUBUS IT'S TOO GOOD
TO BELIEVE! CRESCENT,
WE HAVEN'T LOST YOUR
FATHER AFTER ALL!"



THE LONG MONTHS OF IRON
CONTROL MELT AWAY INTO
HYSTERIC TEARS OF JOY!



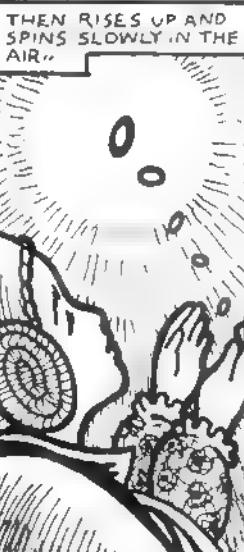
BUT WE WASTE PRECIOUS
TIME! WE MUST WORK
QUICKLY LEST MEGALLA
REACH GAVIN FIRST!
TAKE THE RING, CRESCENT,
WE MUST LEARN ITS TALE!



THE RING BEGINS TO
GLOW IN HER HANDS...

SHARED ENERGY AMPLIFIES THE CHILD'S BUD-
DING POWER!

GARTH...
GARTH! HAVE I
REGAINED MY
HUSBAND ONLY
TO LOSE MY
SON? NO!!
IT MUST
NOT BE!



THEN RISES UP AND
SPINS SLOWLY IN THE
AIR...



EXPANDING WITH EACH
ROTATION...

UNTIL ANOTHER
TIME ANOTHER
PLACE, CAN
BE SEEN...

This young
lad will fit
Gretchen's bill.
SILENCE HIM!

Step...vety, men
Our buyers DON'T
like to be kept
waitng'

FST! TWO MEN
AGAINST ONE YOUTH:
GAVIN WAS STILL
UNCONSCIOUS WHEN
THEY CARRIED HIM
DOWN TO THE
SUBTERRANEAN
WATERWAYS!
WONDER HE OULD
GIVE US NO
WARNING!

That's a
pretty RING you're
wearing ad' YOU WON'T
be needing it where YOU
are going STOP SQUIRMING!

Ah, you
RECOVER boy! Do not
fear, we shall SOON part
company at that OUTCROPPING
ahead!

THAT SOULLESS
CHANTING IN THE
DISTANCE ARGOT'S
DARK BOATMEN!
GAVIN WAS TAKEN
TO THE INFAMOUS
RED BUTCHER!!

THE FOOL! LITTLE DID HE
KNOW THE POWER OF THIS RING,
NOR THE LIVES ITS TAKING
MAY COST!

EVEN
KREEGAR
FEARED THEM
YET HIS
FEAR NOW
COMES FROM
SOMETHING
ELSE'

A
huge
SHAPE
EMERGING
out of the
deep. We're going
to CAPS! ZE

AT THIS POINT KREEGAR
LOST HIS MND! THE
RING CAN TELL US NO MORE!

THE STORY ENDS! THE RING IS BUT A RING
ONCE AGAIN AND GAVIN IS IN
ARGOT'S DIABOLICAL HANDS!!

BUT WHAT SO
TERRIFIED
KREEGAR
IN THE END?

QUELL!!
IT HAD
TO BE
QUELL!



SO THE TRAIL STOPS
WITH A DEAD-END
CLUE! ARGOT COULD
BE IN ANY ONE OF
A HUNDRED DARK
HOLES! YET WE CAN'T
TAKE THE TIME TO
SEARCH THEM ALL!

NOT QUITE. INCUBUS'
QUELL IS THE ANSWER'
ALTHOUGH HE WAS
NEARBY, HE WOULD NOT
INTERFERE WITH ARGOT'S
MEN! BUT HE WOULD
KNOW WHERE THEY TOOK
GAVIN. THERE ARE FEW
SECRETS UNKNOWN TO
QUELL DOWN IN THE
SUNLESS SEAS.



FSSSSST!! NO, ROSANNA QUELL WOULD ONLY
HAVE RETURNED KREEGAR AS BAIT TO LURE US
TO HIM. DO YOU SO SOON FORGET GARTH'S ARM
LOST TO THAT ANCIENT SLIME IN ONE OF
HIS DEADLY GAMES?! YOU MUST NOT GO!!



AS YOU SAY YOURSELF WE
HAVE NO TIME AND NO
ALTERNATIVE! STAY HERE
AND GUARD CRESCENT WHILE
I GO TO QUELL!

NO ROSANNA,
IF YOU MUST
GO, THEN WE
ALL GO!

THE
DANGER
IS TOO
GREAT!

IS THE DANGER
OF SPLITTING OUR
FAMILY FARTHER
APART ANY
GRETTER, MOTHER?

I'M SORRY!
YOU ARE
BOTH RIGHT!
WE WILL
FACE QUELL
TOGETHER!



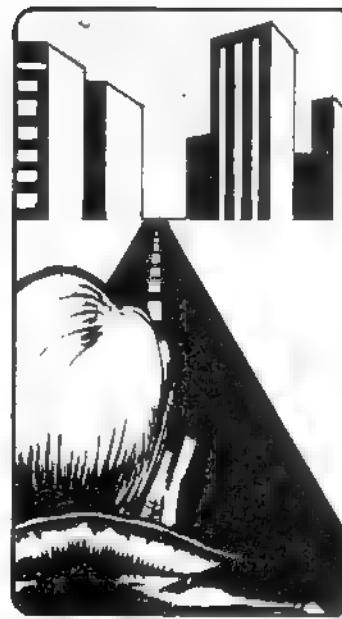
FEAR OF DEATH!

© 1978

MICHAEL T. GILBERT & DOROTHY BUCHER

Finished Art

Concept/Layout



A Soft And Gentle Rain.

© 1978 Michael T. Gilbert



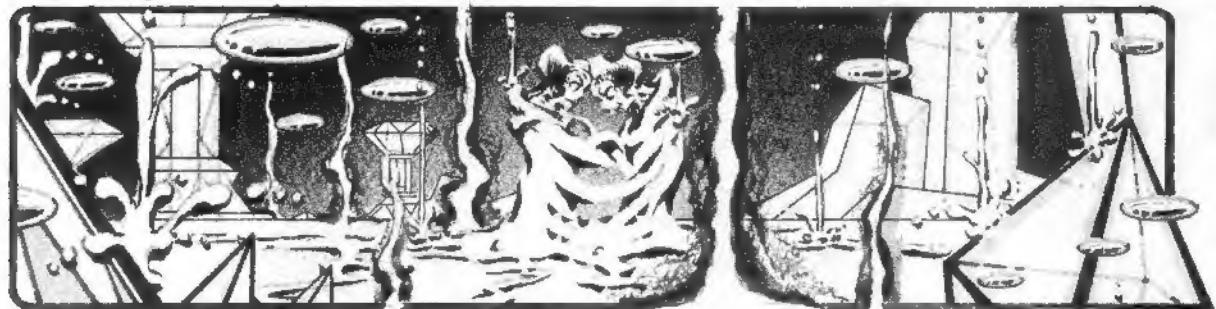
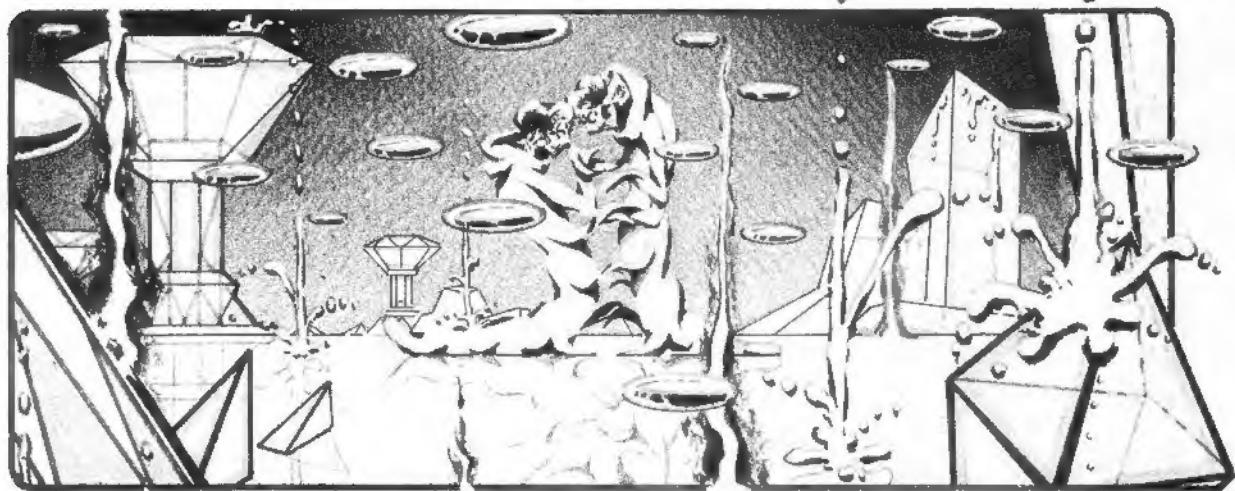
the
"no-more"
rains.

it
"no-more"
rains.

have
you a
protector?

protector?

no.



LETTERS

Dear Mike,

I'm writing concerning your new magazine, IMAGINE, and your entire Star*Reach Productions line. I just purchased IMAGINE #2 and am not at all displeased with it. This even though "Black Crow", "Days of Future Past", "Drug Fiends of the Martian Moon" and "Encounter at the Crazy Cat Saloon" were throwaways... and one more, "Speed", should never have been published. The reason I do not feel cheated is because of Craig Russell's magnificent "The Avatar and the Chimera". It is simply beautiful. The color makes it a richly textured classic. Looking forward with great eagerness towards the second part.

The other stories I mentioned are throwaways for one very good reason: they are all pointless. Their publication in no way adds to the stature of your magazine. Even the one that did make me think a bit ("Black Crow") was ruined because of its silly ending. "Speed" was done with much more inspiration before by Harlan Ellison, as you point out in your editorial. Gene Day's artwork in this one is mediocre, making its printing even more suspect. Also in ARIEL #3, Al Williamson does a color graphic-story adaptation of "Along the Scenic Route". Refer Mr. Day to that publication.

IMAGINE #1 was much better both art and story wise, except for the somewhat childish Marshall Rogers color section.

I must take you to task for printing the same cover on both front and back, and printing the idiotic ad gags on the inside back cover. A dollar-fifty is a lot to pay for the same covers, so I suggest either wraparounds or separate covers (perhaps even one page vignettes in color!) Your ads in the back of the books look something like the stuff dreamt up by Madison Avenue. How about more art or editorial (a letter column)?

I expect to see a great improvement in IMAGINE #3 and STAR*REACH #13. Both have seemingly limitless potential if only you would exert a bit more editorial control and judgement. Don't go by the "if I understand it, it must be Art" syndrome so well described by Spider Robinson in the February, 1978 ANALOG. And many of your past stories were not understandable. I believe you're getting better in that respect, though — there haven't been any of those type in either issue of IMAGINE or in STAR*REACH for awhile.

Now you must concentrate on throwing out the stories that only have pretty pictures and not other redeeming value. Almost all the art you publish is good, but most of your stories are pointless and do not make me or anyone think.

As I see it now, Star*Reach Productions may soon grasp the sun it holds dear. I hope so...

David R. Schellhase
575 Euclid Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

(Well, as you can see, we've taken one of your suggestions almost immediately: editorial content on the inside back cover. I've resisted doing this for quite awhile, since we receive so few letters, but now I'm hoping that by offering some reinforcement (your name in print, hey!) we'll get some more.)

Also, you'll note that this issue has original back cover art. The idea of running the front cover again sans copy was an idea that didn't work. I hope not to do it again unless forced. —MF)

Dear Mike Friedrich & Star*Reach Productions,

Although I don't write to comics, Craig Russell's "Avatar and the Chimera" has excited me to take typewriter in hand. It's AMAZING! Though not perfect, it is a stunning comic strip. I keep looking at it in amazement — just studying it, and marveling over how well it holds together, minus any dialogue. I'm no fan of textless strips — but I was impressed — and I mean IMPRESSED!

Let me just drool over what impressed me in the Russell piece. First, the lettering — a beautiful indication of what is classy in Russell — a fluid line that is contained and disciplined enough to maintain a "classic" look. Would Smith ever have the freedom to write "And Then" in that cartoonish style? Yet it's a proper touch, for it seems to indicate a lack of pretension in the strip to follow.

I'm at a loss as to where to continue... let's talk about colour: the tones all point to a watery feel, all encouraged by rain, pools of water, and the white-veined blue of the temple (which suggests watery reflections). Water is the perfect Symbolist element (many works pictured submerged scenes and drownings — one of the most effective being Delville's "Treasures of Satan"), and Russell uses it to great effect.

I especially liked the objects in Russell's landscape: the mirrors (the watery effects there recalled Cocteau's Orpheus film), the Gaudi staircase (Gaudi was the perfect art nouveau architect), oh — and that little demon-figure that slams the doors — just beautiful. The thing to bear in mind is that though Russell may borrow or suggest, it is all in complete harmony with his style. Russell has an established style, and within that style is all manner of elaboration and cross-references.

Actually, it'd be silly to continue praising panels, as just about all of them have something classy to offer. But I must praise that underwater sequence when the Avatar enters the Chimera's watery world — Ahhh, beauty! A marvelous scene that suggests waves, worlds, and new experiences. Here, alas, lurk my only two criticisms: the panel where the Avatar and the Chimera face each other is a bit weak and unsuggestive, and the creature that looms up and knocks the Avatar silly is a bit too close to comedy — but just makes it. But these are minor. This story offers so much as is so rich in imagery and expressiveness that I can live with these minor flaws.

Russell is a needed breath of fresh air in a field laden with pretension and stiffness. His is the right touch to make symbolist imagery vital, and not mere mimicry. Here's hoping a long life to him, and may his strips multiply!

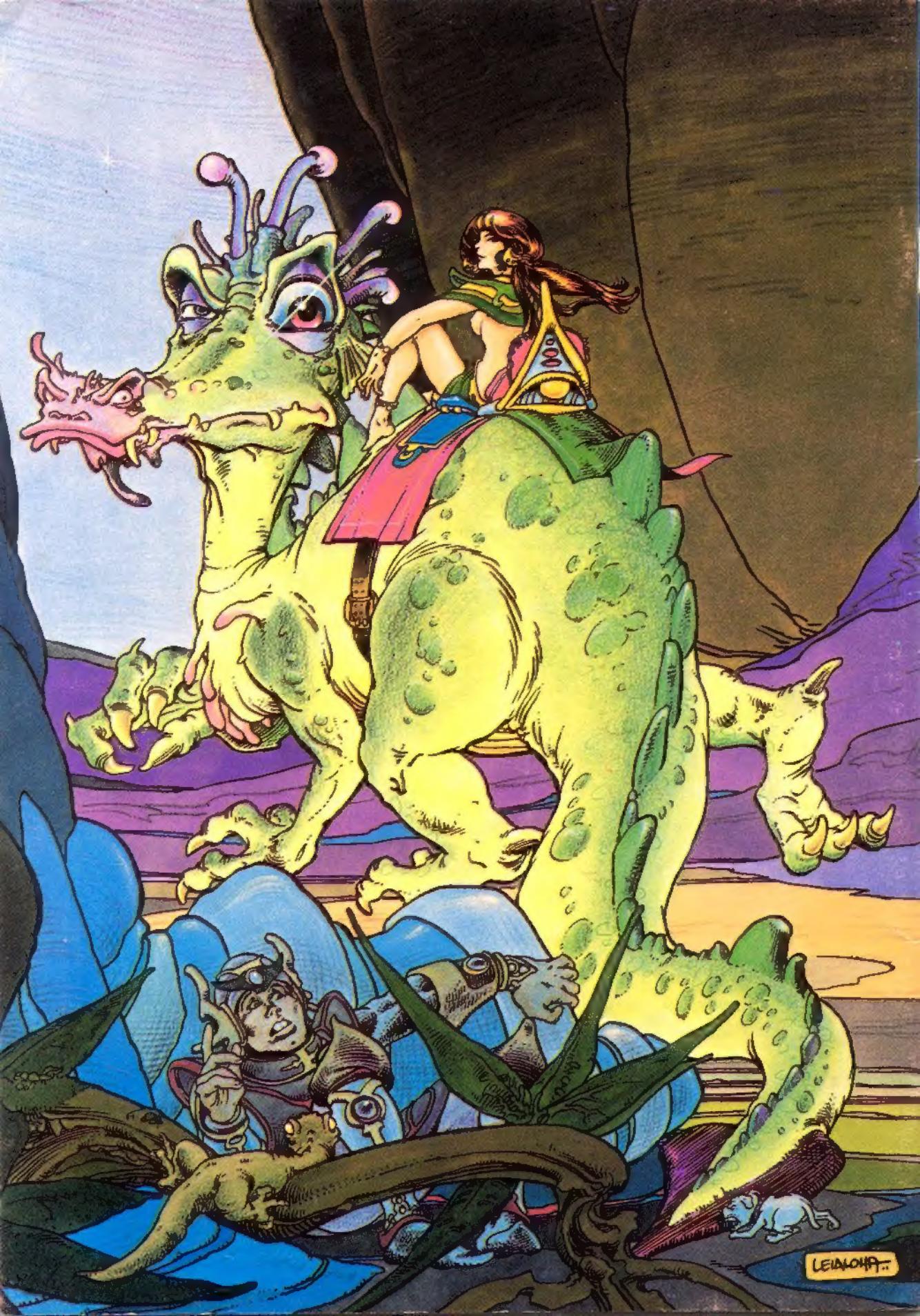
Robert Schaffer
3-07 Lambert Road
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

BACK ISSUES

STAR*REACH #1 thru #14	\$1.50 @
PUDGE #1, #2, #3	\$1.50 @
QUACK #2 thru #6	\$1.25 @
IMAGINE #1, #2, #3	\$1.50 @
PARSIFAL	\$2.00
CODY STARBUCK	\$2.00

PLEASE ENCLOSE 40¢ FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING. THANKS.

STAR*REACH PRODUCTIONS
BOX 2328
BERKELEY, CA 94702



LEIALOHPT...



Imagine #3

Published August 1978

1st Edition

Star*Reach Productions

\$1.50

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ISBN:

Artists:

Mike Friedrich (editor) - 2(e)

P. Craig Russell - 1, 19-26

Masaich Mukalde - 3 - 6

Mary E. Gordon - 3-6(l)

Mike Vosberg - 7-18

Paul Levitz - 7 - 17(dialog)

Lee Marrs - 17-18

Mickey Schwaberow - 27-37

Michael T. Gilbert - 38-39(finished art), 40-42

Dorothy Bucher - 38-39(concept, layout)

Steve Lelaloha - 44

Sir Real's

UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX

Stories:

2 - Editorial

3 - The Spider Thread

7 - Songs To Aging Children Come

17 - Ersatz

19 - The Avatar And The Chimera, Part 2

27 - Nebula, Gavlin's Ring, Chapter 1

38 - Fear Of Death

40 - A Soft And Gentle Rain

43 - Letters

Comments:

Says "First Printing August 1978" on page 2.

Someone wrote on the cover logo with a red ballpoint pen. <gm>